DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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1. COUNTRY: ARGENTINA (AR)

2. REPORT NUMBER: (b)(3):10 USC 42

3. TITLE: (U) POLITICAL-CONVERSATIONS WITH ARGENTINE LEADERS

4. PROJECT NUMBER: N/A

5. DATE OF INFORMATION: 790101

6. DATE OF REPORT: 790123

7. DATE & PLACE OF ACQUISITION: 790105, BUENOS AIRES

8. REFERENCES: (b)(3):10 USC 424

9. ASSESSMENT: SOURCE DR INFO

10. ORIGINATOR: (b)(3):10 USC 424

11. REQUEST EVALUATION ___, QPQ ___ (country)

12. PREPARING OFFICER: (b)(3):10 USC 424

13. APPROVING AUTHORITY:

14. SOURCE: Amembassy Memo of Conversation, 790109

DSR-79-00091

15. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

~~NOFORN TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO HOST GOVERNMENT~~

DIRC YES ☐ NO ☒

16. SUMMARY:

~~(S)~~ This report forwards Amembassy Memorandum of Conversation of 790109, concerning an Argentine Army officer's views of the Beagle Channel dispute, U.S. Human Rights issues, and sources general opinion of U.S.-Argentine relations. This report indicates that dealing with the U.S. is extremely difficult and that Argentina should strengthen its relations with the Soviet Union.

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Rec'd RDS-3R/ 31 JAN 79

COMMENT: ~~(S)~~ The comment that the Army's preparation for a possible conflict had redirected the Army energies back to "basics" and away from the subversion issue has been voiced by several Army officers.

Sec. 3.3(b) (6)

~~(S)~~ The comments that the experiences of the last 3 years have heightened interest and increased opinions of the officer corps concerning internal political affairs has also been stated by other officers in the Argentine

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20. ENCLOSURES:

1 Enclosure

1. Memo of Conversation dtd 790109, 1 cy, 3 pgs ~~(S)~~

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21. This IR contains 2 pages.

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1 SEPT 62 EDITION MAY BE USED UNTIL 1 MAR 77

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Army.

(U) Concerning U.S.-Argentine relations, different opinions can be found among different officers. Most Argentine officers would agree that dealing with the U.S. is a "pain." However, possibly the majority of these officers still believe that relations with the U.S. will improve with time. These same officers still see the U.S. as the only salvation against the spread of Communism. How many more Argentine officers begin thinking that the Soviet Union is a better partner than the U.S will depend on the future course of U.S.-Argentine relations. As one senior officer stated [ ] "You can only kick your pet dog so long before one day he gets up and leaves."

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: January 9, 1979

SUBJECT : Politics, The Beagle and Human Rights

PLACE : American Club, Buenos Aires

PARTICIPANTS: Col. Ricardo N. Flouret, Army Secretary General's Office
Dr. Gerardo Schamis, Former Argentine Ambassador to Bolivia
Mr. Alfredo Mariano Olivera, Subdirector Discusion Magazine
Mr. F.Allen Harris, Political Officer, American Embassy, Buenos Aires

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The Beagle and Human Rights

Col. Flouret said that Argentina would have to adopt a wait and see attitude on the Beagle negotiations under the Pope. He characterized the Montevideo agreement as neither good news nor bad news, but said it was "regular." He did venture that it would be almost impossible to put the country back on a war footing again over the Beagle.

Flouret said that the one demonstrable benefit of the Beagle call up was the positive impact it would have on reducing human rights violations. He specifically requested that I note this in a report to Washington. Flouret, who had just returned from the Patagonian front, said that the Beagle dispute had dramatically changed the professional focus within

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Drafting Office and Officer

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the Army. Previously action and career advancement were for those in the war against subversion. Flouret said this has now changed and that regular professional assignments were now the sought after jobs within the Army. He noted that although the Chilean call up had been very expensive, it had been a good investment in terms of redirecting the energies of the Army out of the anti-subversion campaign.

Flouret commented that although the Army had returned to its professional responsibilities, the activities of the last three years had changed its men. They were not the soldiers and officers of the Peronist period, but were people who had great interests and opinions regarding internal political affairs.

Human Rights

Flouret said that he had been involved in the war in Tucuman as a regimental commander. He said that he had ordered operations and had been personally involved in some of them. He commented that the United States Government had to realize that there were real political costs involved in scaling back the fight against subversion. In the early days, it had been a clear case of killing them before they killed you. He noted that the "20,000 lives" taken in the battle had been necessary to save the country. Things, he admitted, had changed. The Army was getting control over the operational units and substantial reductions in the number of disappeareds could be noted, especially in the last half of 1978. But he said that too fast a let-up would allow the subversives to reappear again.

U.S.-Argentine Relations

Several times in the conversation Flouret argued that dealings with the United States were a pain. There are always serious problems over human rights, over the Treaty of Tlatelolco (which he noted in passing would not be ratified anytime in the near future), over economic issues, etc. He said the costs and benefits of such a relationship with the United States are not advantageous to Argentina. He noted that even if Argentina took steps to gain favor with the United States, "the U.S. would not even sell us a 'Piper'." He commented that trying to have a decent relationship with the United States had been a fundamental mistake of the Argentine

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military. What the Argentines really ought to do is strengthen their relations with the Soviets who were the Argentines' number one trading partner and who were providing needed technology to Argentina, for example, turbines for an important power project.

Flouret said that relations between the United States and Argentina had always been bad and that he expected there would always be serious difficulties between the two countries. He noted that even before the Carter human rights campaign had begun, Kissinger during the Ford Administration had gone to Brazil and announced that Brazil was the United States' senior partner in Latin America. He added that the Argentines had invited Kissinger down for the World Cup and Kissinger had the bad grace to stop off in Brazil on his way back to the United States. He said that the next time the Argentines invited Kissinger, his ticket would be non-stop both ways.

CLEARANCES:
DCM:MG~~haplin~~
POLCOUNS:WHHallman

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